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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1450
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1273
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000440

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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
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STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2017

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SUBJECT: POLITICIANS IN HAITI NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas C. Tighe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Cite Soleil mayoral candidate Andou Evel met with Poloff and detailed his knowledge of the neighborhood and his hope that he would be declared the winner of the election. However, Poloff later learned that he may be heavily implicated in violent gang activity and has since cut off contact with him. Evel's sometimes employer, Gregory Mevs, could not vouch for Evel's good character but indicated that he doubted Evel would personally direct gang activity. End Summary.

12. (C) Poloff met with Cite Soleil mayoral candidate Andou Evel of the UNION party on February 12. However, after the meeting Poloff heard from MINUSTAH political affairs deputy Lizbeth Cullity (protect) that Evel reportedly is 'the consummate Cite Soleil gangster' and that he reportedly killed or ordered the murder of six people when he didn't win the mayoral race. In the past he was the chief of security for the Mevs' cement factory on the outskirts of Cite Soleil and served as the runner for the 'protection money' the Mevs paid the gangs in order to operate in the neighborhood.

13. (C) During the February 12 meeting with Poloff, Evel was optimistic about his prospects for winning the mayoral race despite projected results showing that a different candidate from the independent 'Pel e Pikwa' party won the election. The other two members of Evel's mayoral slate are Barbara Guillaume, whom he said was a niece of UNION leader Chavannes Jeune, and Meres Louis. Evel described the activities of the major Cite Soleil gang leaders, whom he has known since they were children, claiming they were good boys led astray by politicians beginning in 1994. He reported that gang leaders Evans and Amaral were ready to give up their weapons, and that Belony had already done so. (Note: Disarmament commission president Alex Fils-Aime later characterized these offers to Polcouns as 'a joke'. End Note.) Evel also talked about distributing rice and water to residents on behalf of the Mevs and the Vorbes, two of Haiti's most successful business families. Evel expressed his desire for MINUSTAH to stay in the neighborhood as pacifiers, and said they also need social programs to keep the gangs at bay.

14. (C) Poloffs met with Gregory Mevs on March 6 and inquired about his familiarity with Evel. Mevs explained that Evel had indeed been employed by his company for several years, beginning in approximately 1998, but he believed Evel had left his employ to run for office. Evel helped the company in negotiations with the gangs, but Mevs noted a specific case in which Evel was unable to secure the release of a kidnapping victim as evidence that his relationships with the gang leaders were not airtight. Mevs said he doubted that Evel would pinpoint people to be assassinated for the sake of his mayoral campaign, but he would not vouch for him. Mevs also noted that Barbara Guillaume was part of Evel's mayoral slate and that she is very well educated and respected. Despite his opinion that Evel was not directly involved in gang activity, he agreed that you never know when working with someone who liaises with the gangs how far they may cross into the criminal realm.

15. (C) Evel was recommended to Poloff as a contact by Post's Office of Public Diplomacy. He is a recipient through PD of a WHA micro-grant for two years of English classes at the Haitian-American Institute. He is one of 16 grant recipients, all of whom are from the Cite Soleil environs, and has completed nine months of training to date. Evel was also scheduled to attend an IVLP program in the US in April on grassroots democracy as one of five participants from Cite Soleil. PD is currently exploring the best way to remove him from the program.

16. (C) Comment: Even with the existence of legitimate democratic election, places like Cite Soleil are still in danger of being governed by gangs. Evel initially came recommended to the PD section by normally reliable sources who identified him as a contact who could help a PD-sponsored film crew produce a documentary in Cite Soleil. Evel's connection to Chavannes Jeune and the well-regarded Union

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party also burnished his credentials. Though he may or may not actually be a gang member or murderer, the nature of Evel's work demands an intimate relationship with some of Cite Soleil's worst criminals. This experience serves as another reminder that as Post seeks to expand contacts in local politics, we cannot be too careful. Disreputable characters are often seeking entry into the political arena, and into the U.S. as well.
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